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Message Text

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72
ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 ARA-11 ADP-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 INRE-00 TRSE-00

L-03 EB-11 SCA-01 H-02 INR-09 PRS-01 CG-00 SCS-03

AID-20 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01 PA-03 CIAE-00

DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 RSR-01 /102 W
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O 140001 Z MAR 73
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4970

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MEXICO 1649

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS, MX
SUBJECT: FISHING BOAT INCIDENT - PURSUIT OF F/ V WARRIOR BY MEXICAN
MINE SWEEPER NO. ID-19

SUMMARY: ON MARCH 12 MEXICAN NAVY ORDERED A MINE SWEEPER TO INVES-
TIGATE REPORTED RECEIVED FROM MEXICAN LIGHTHOUSE AT ISLA PEREZ OFF
YUCATAN PENINSULA THAT F/ V WARRIOR OPERATING WITHIN SIGHTING
DISTANCE AND THUS PRESUMABLY IN MEXICAN TERRITORIAL WATERS. IN
PURSUING FLEEING WARRIOR, MINE SWEEPER FIRED WARNING
SHOTS BUT US VESSEL REFUSED TO HALT. WARRIOR CONTACTED
US COAST GUARD DISTRICT NEW ORLEAN , WHICH SENT
OBSERVATION AIRCRAFT AS CHASE CONTINUED. AIRCRAFT
OBSERVED WARRIOR BEING CIRCLED BY PATROL VESSEL APPROXIMATELY
70 MILES OFF ALACRAN REEF AND RETURNED TO BASE.
SUSPECTING THAT US VESSEL HAD NOT ONLY VIOLATED MEXICAN
TERRITORIAL WATERS BUT MIGHT BE CARRYING SOMETHING
OTHER THAN SHRIMP, MEXICAN NAVY CONTINUED PURSUIT BUT
LATER DECIDED TO ABANDON SEARCH AND REFERRED MATTER TO
SECRETARIAT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. F/ V WARRIOR NOW HEADED
TOWARD TEXAS COAST. FOREIGN SECRETARIAT HAS ASKED EMBASSY ABOUT
INCIDENT AND HAS REQUESTED THAT US CUSTOMS EXAMINE SHIP ON
ARRIVAL IN U. S. EMBASSY ALSO EXPECTS TO RECEIVE FORMAL GOM PROTEST.
EMD SUMMARY.
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1. ON MORNING MARCH 12 EMBASSY WAS INFORMED BY 8 TH USCG
DISTRICT OFFICE NEW ORLEANS THAT AT 0928 LOCAL TIME THE

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U. S. F/ V WARRIOR REPORTED THAT IT WAS BEING PURSUED BY
THE MEXICAN MINE SWEEPER ID-19 . THE WARRIOR REPORTED ITS
LOCATION ABOUT 18 MILES SOUTHWEST OF ALACRAN REEF. THE
WARRIOR ALSO REPORTED THAT MEXICAN MINE SWEEPER HAD
EARLIER FIRED WARNING SHOTS FROM TWO 40- MM GUNS AND LATER HAD FIRED
SMALL ARMS. THE USCG DISTRICT ADVISED THAT COAST GUARD
AIRCRAFT WOULD FLY TO THE SCENE TO OBSERVE.

2. AT 1245 LOCAL TIME ALUSNA CALLED LIAISON OFFICER
MEXICAN NAVAL GENERAL STAFF WHO WAS UNAWARE OF INCIDENT
BUT SAID THAT HE WOULD CHECK INTO IT, AT SAME TIME
ASSURING ALUSNA THAT NO PHYSICAL HARM WOULD BE INFLICTED
BY MEXICAN MINE SWEEPER ON WARRIOR BY GUN FIRE.

3. AT 1505 USCG NEW ORLEANS CALLED EMBASSY TO REPORT
THAT AIRCRAFT CG HU-16 WAS OVERHEAD OF F/ V WARRIOR,
WHICH WAS PROCEEDING IN NORTHERLY DIRECTION AT 10 KNOTS
(MAXIMUM SPEED) WITH THE MEXICAN NAVAL PATROL BESSEL
CIRCLING IN AN APPARENT ATTEMPT TO HALT WARRIOR.
WARRIOR MASTER STILL REFUSED TO STOP AND HAD REQUESTED
COAST GUARD ASSISTANCE IN " GETTING MEXICAN OFF HIS BACK."
POSITION OF WARRIOR AT THAT TIME WAS APPROXIMATELY 70 MILES
NNW OFF REEF. AT 1620 LOCAL TIME USCG NEW ORLEANS REPORTED
TO EMBASSY THAT THE AIRCRAFT ON STATION WOULD HAVE TO DEPART
IN 15 MINUTES DUE TO WEATHER CONDITIONS BUT THAT THEY HAD
BEEN INSTRUCTED TO MAINTAIN CONSTANT AIR SURVEILLANCE.
BY THEN MASTER F/ V WARRIOR HAD MODIFIED ORIGINAL STORY
STATING THAT HE WAS APPROACHED WHILE FISHING 12-14 MILES
OFF REEF AND NOT 1 8 MILES AS ORIGINALLY INDICATED.

4. AT 1745 MEXICAN NAVY FOREIGN LIAISON OFFICER INFORMED
ALUSNA THAT ID-19 HAD REPORTED AS OF 1415 LOCAL TIME
THAT WARIOR WOULD NOT STOP FOR INSPECTION AND THAT USCG
AIRCRAFT WAS OVERHEAD. OFFICER ADDED THERE WAS SPECULATION
BY MEXICAN NAVY THAT WARRIOR MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING ON
BOARD OTHER THAN SHRIMP AND WAS CONSIDERING CONTINUED
PURSUIT AND LATER REQUEST TO USCG TO ASSIST IN INSPECTING
VESSEL UPON ENTRY INTO US WATERS. AT 1950 EMBASSY
INFORMED BY LIAISON OFFICER THAT MEXICAN NAVY HAD CALLED
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OFF PURSUIT AND REFERRED MATTER TO FONSEC. DURING THIS
CONVERSATION LIAISON OFFICER SAID THAT ISLA PEREZ LIGHT-
HOUSE HAD REPORTED VESSEL OPERATING SO CLOSE THAT NAME OF
VESSEL COULD BE SEEN. AS RESULT ID-19 HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED
TO INVESTIGATE.

5. DIRECTOR GENERAL DIPLOMATIC SERVICE RAUL VALDES
CALLED POLITICAL COUNSELOR AT 2200 MARCH 12 ON BEHALF
OF FOREIGN SECRETARY RABASA TO INQUIRE ABOUT INCIDENT.

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WE GAVE HIM WHAT INFORMATION WE HAD ON IT AND FOLLOWED
UP MARCH 13 ON ADDITIONAL DETAILS. VALDES ASKED THAT
IN ADDITION TO USCG INSPECTION, U. S. CUSTOMS INSPECT
WARRIOR FOR ANY CONTRABAND OR ILLEGAL GOODS. WE SAID
WE WOULD RELAY THIS REQUEST TO DEPARTMENT.

6. ON MARCH 13 AT 1110 ALUSNA TELEPHONED USCG NEW ORLEANS
WHICH REPORTED THAT WARRIOR HEADED FOR SABINE PASS DOWN
RIVER FROM PORT ARTHUR AND WOULD NORMALLY ARRIVE AT 0930
MARCH 14 PROVIDED VESSEL DID NOT ALTER COURSE OR DECIDE
TO CONTINUE FISHING. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION, USCG
NEW ORLEANS STATED THAT ONLY JUSTIFICATION FOR BOARDING
AND INSPECTING VESSEL UPON ARRIVAL WOULD BE TO CHECK
SAFETY EQUIPMENT. CUSTOMS OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, MIGHT BE
TAKEN ON BOARD PROVIDED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DEVELOPED
INDICATING VESSEL' S CARGO SUSPECT.

7. LEADING MEXICO CITY DAILIES TODAY CARRIED UPI DISPATCH
DATELINED NEW ORLEANS MARCH 12 WHICH QUOTED USCG
SOURCES TO EFFECT THAT WARRIOR BEING PURSUED BY MEXICAN
NAVAL VESSEL, THAT COAST GUARD HAD NOTIFIED US EMBASSY
MEXICO CITY WHICH HAD ADVISED THAT WARRIOR SHOULD STOP AND
SUBMIT TO SEARCH. DISPATCH SAID THAT WARRIOR " OWNER"
HAD REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT INTEND TO COMPLY SINCE HE WAS

IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND HAD DONE NOTHING WRONG. QUOTING
MEXICAN NAVY SOURCES EL SOL AND LA PRENSA COMMENTED THAT
PURSUIT HAD BEEN ABANDONED INASMUCH AS USCG WAS AWARE OF
INCIDENT, ADDING THAT MATTER REFERRED TO FONSEC OUT OF
RESPECT FOR " FREE TRANSIT ON INTERNATIONAL WATERS."
LA PRENSA COMMMENT CALLED WARRIOR A " PIRATE" AND SAW INCIDENT
AS EXAMPLE OF MEXICAN DETERMINATION TO ENFORCE RESPECT FOR
NEW TERRITORIAL WATER LIMIT " RESULTING FROM EXPIRATION OF
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INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS WITH SEVERAL COUNTRIES."
BOTH PAPERS REPORTED THAT PURSUIT HAD BEEN TRIGGERED BY
REPORT FROM MEMICAN LIGHTHOUSE AT ISLA PEREZ.

8. COMMENT: EMBASSY EXPECTS PROTEST FROM MEXICAN GOVERN-
MENT OVER THIS INCIDENT WHICH CAN ALSO HAVE HARMFUL EFFECT
ON NUMBER OF OUTSTANDING FISHERY PROBLEMS WITH MEXICO.
PARTICULARLY, REINSTATEMENT OF RADIO RENEWALS FOR LICENSES
BY WEST COAST VESSELS MAY BE MORE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN.
INTENSIFICATION OF MEXICAN PATROL OF US FISHING VESSELS
CAN ALSO BE EXPECTED.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO ASK U. S.
CUSTOMS TO INSPECT WARRIOR ON ITS ARRIVAL IN U. S.,
PRESUMABLY AT 0930 MARCH 14 AT SABINE PASS.;

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